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THE STUDY OF
DEMOCRACY

Social Acceptance of Bioenergy: Key Lessons and Insights from Bulgaria, Italy, Sweden and Austria

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What we do



CSD | CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF DEMOCRACY

Low-Carbon Technologies

Roadmap for Deployment in Bulgaria by 2050

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The Energy Security and Innovation Nexus

Towards a New Regulatory Framework for Offshore Wind Energy Development in Bulgaria

ETIP Bioenergy



The European Technology and Innovation Platform Bioenergy is an industry-led stakeholder platform that brings together relevant actors from academia, industry, and civil society, engaged in the development of sustainable bioenergy and competitive biofuel technologies.

Our methodology

Citizen Panel I

- Visions

Expert Workshop

- Policy recommendations

Citizen Panel II

- Validation and prioritization by citizens


The Citizen Visions on Science, Technology and Innovation (CIVISTI) is a participatory method for identifying new and emerging issues for European Science & Technology.

- Adapted and implemented in Austria, Bulgaria, Italy and Sweden.
- Focus on two broad perspectives: sustainability in agriculture and forestry, and just transition and social innovation.

The citizen panels

- A total of 108 participants from diverse backgrounds took part in the citizen panels in the 4 countries.
- Participants were recruited and selected according to a set of preliminary criteria to ensure comparability and transparency.
- Participants were given a set of questionnaires before, during and after the citizen panels to assess their attitudes toward EU policy-making, bioenergy and biofuels.



The background features a vibrant, futuristic cityscape with a mix of green and blue tones. Overlaid on this are numerous white icons and symbols, including gears, a pie chart, a globe, a leaf, a wind turbine, a solar panel, a recycling symbol, and a person. These elements are interconnected by glowing white lines and circles, creating a sense of a complex, interconnected system. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and optimistic, suggesting a sustainable and technologically advanced future.

Imagine you live in the year 2055. You wake up, look out the window, make some coffee or tea, and breakfast, and look out the window. What do you see? How do you imagine the world to be?

Citizen vision themes

independence from big enterprises
materialism becomes limited not only based on financial interests
No economic growth is targeted independence from big enterprises
turning away from neoliberalism and unlimited growth
Satisfied with less

high-quality products that are long-lasting, reusable and repairable
cities as sources of biomass
reduce resource consumption recovering marginal land
circular economy less waste

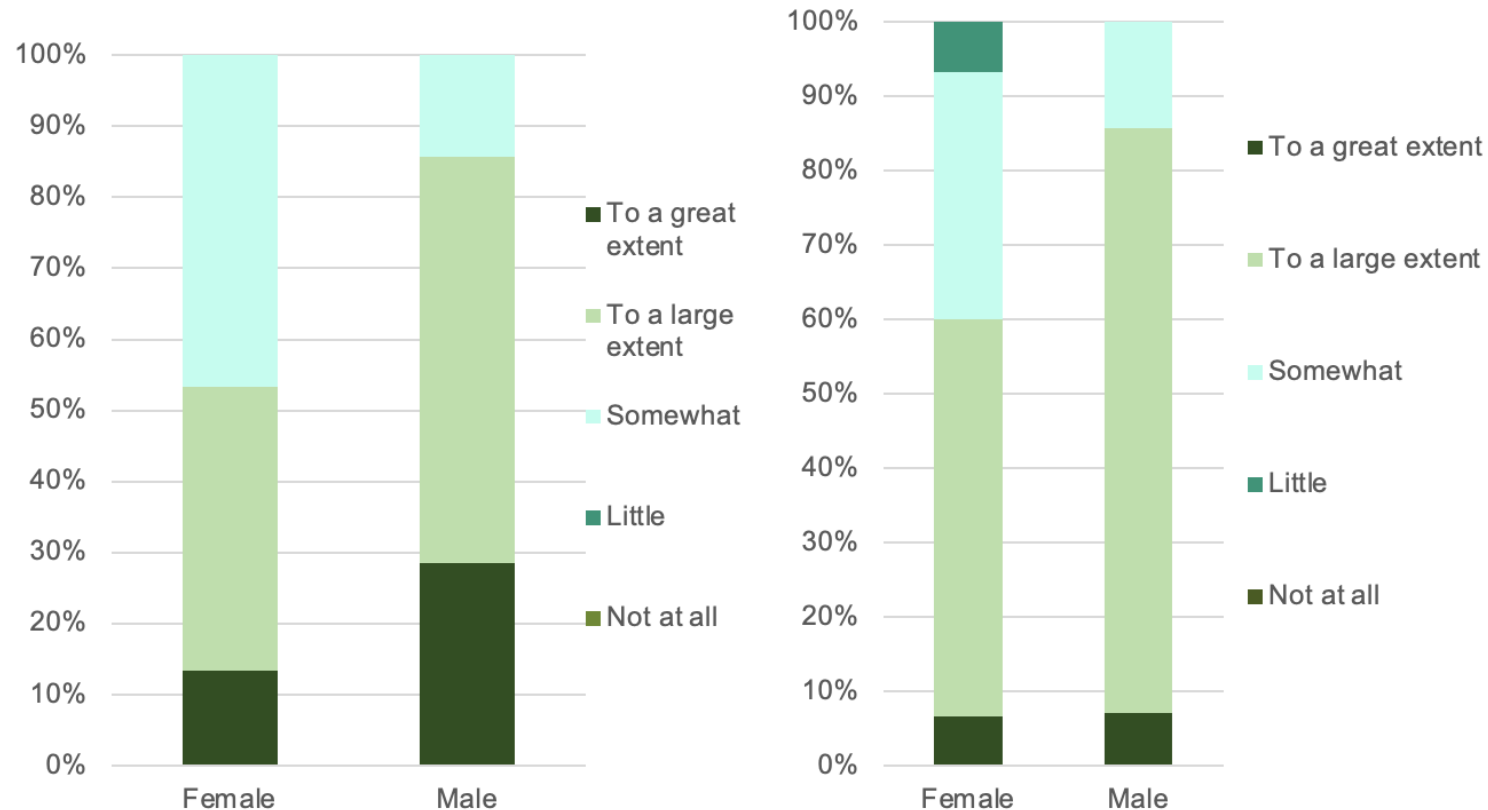
produced and shared on a small scale
sustainability in small communities decentralized and regional
networked regional associations

everyone in the community contributes to this diversity and bears responsibility
collaboration among local communities.
stronger cooperation between institutions and citizens
Cooperation at the core of the energy transition
synergies among agriculture, environment and energy.

environmental education sustainable food education
awareness through education
education to promote environmental awareness political education at school age
educational subject in school "Circular Economy & Energy"
implement civic education energy is taught as a separate subject in school

Perceived levels of trust

The level of trust in bioenergy as a sustainable solution increased moderately after the second citizen panel compared to the first citizen panel.

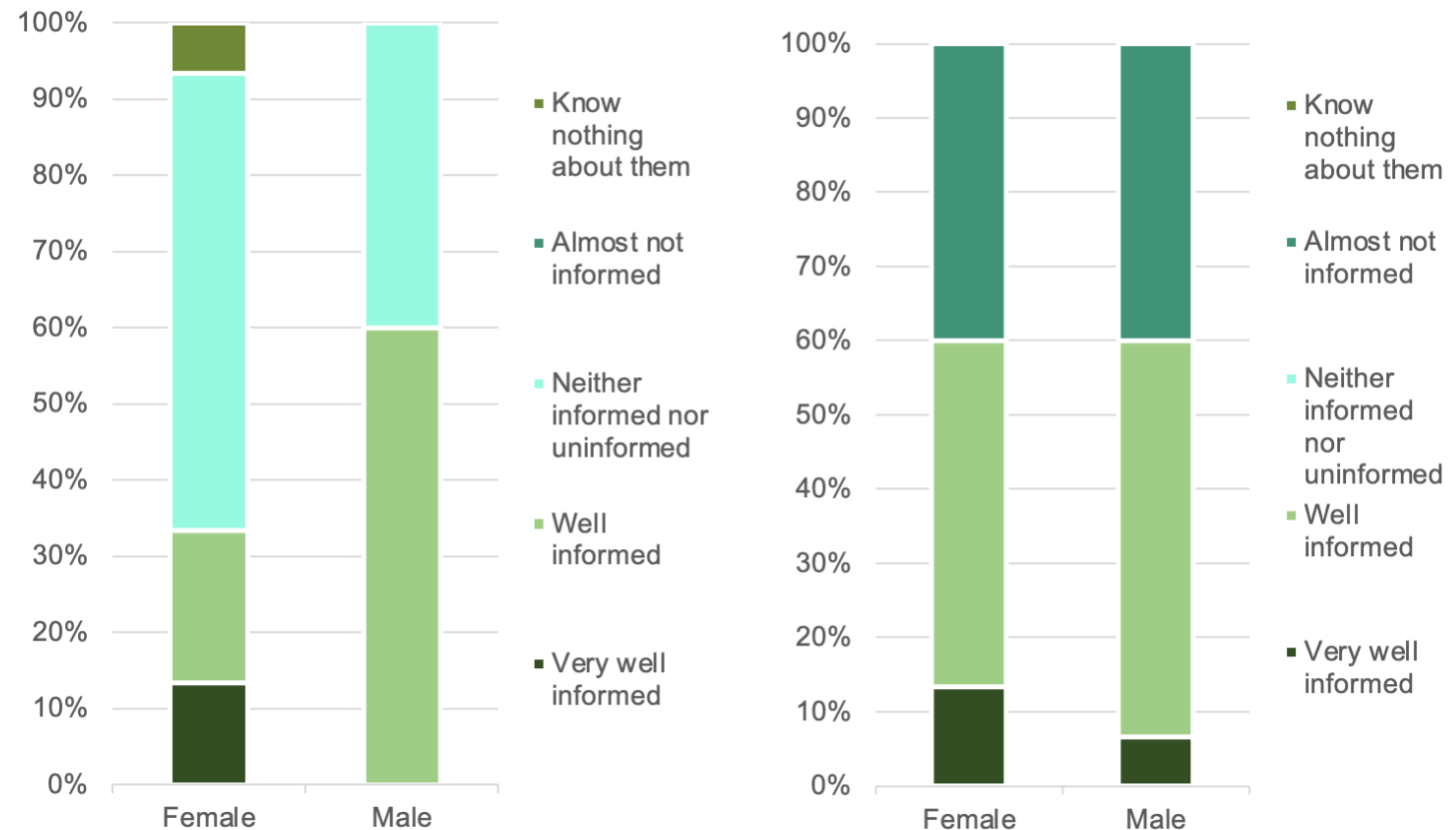


Source: CSD

Perceived levels of information

The share of participants who reported being well-informed increased drastically after the end of the citizen panels, mostly among female participants.

Figure III. Participant answers to the question "In your opinion, how informed are you about bioenergy and its potential developments that address important societal challenges?"

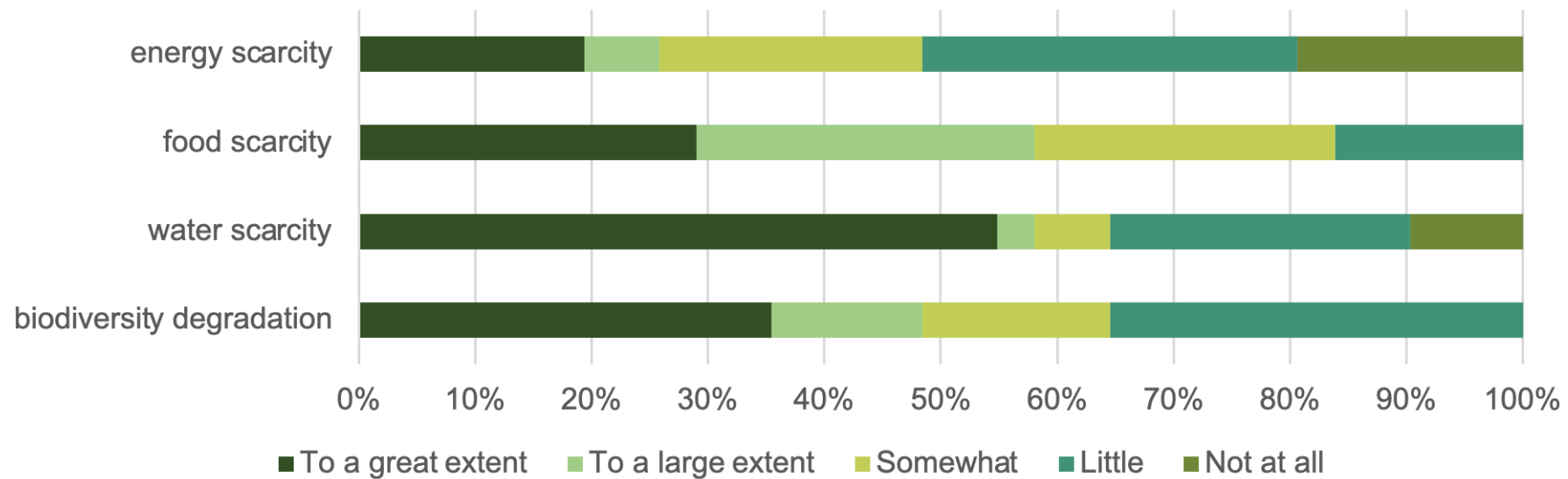


Source: CSD

Concerns related to bioenergy

Participants were most concerned about water scarcity and biodiversity degradation when thinking about the future.

Figure IV. Participant answers to the question “When thinking about the future (the year 2055) how concerned are you about energy scarcity/food scarcity/water scarcity/biodiversity degradation?”



Source: CSD

Country differences in visions for the future of bioenergy

Austria

- Focus on decentralisation
- Community development and healthy lifestyle
- Better forestry and agriculture management

Sweden

- Integrating technology within bioenergy solutions
- Creating multifunctional and adaptable agriculture system
- Fostering an inclusive environment for innovation

Bulgaria

- Focus on regulatory improvements
- Focus on better partnerships with public and private sectors
- Focus on waste management and education

Italy

- Cooperation between institutions
- Solutions with a focus on circular economy
- Equal and fair distribution of resources

Key takeaways

Engaging citizens in the panels are part of the broader participatory foresight framework of the EU and is proven to be an effective and representative way of verifying future policy options within different social, age and ethnic groups.

- Formats such as the CIVISTI panels can be an effective way for citizens to get informed about bioenergy and its potential developments (increase with **about 45% on average** after the citizen panels).
- Country-specific differences in the vision-making process and the ranking of policy recommendations can be a valuable tool for making EU policies more context specific.
- Participants valued that the panels contributed to 1) the improvement to the democratic legitimacy of EU research programs, and 2) fostering communication between citizens and researchers gained top popularity at the end of the panel.

Thank you!

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